

Amṛta Vārtā



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AMRTA VĀRTĀ

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (POSTAGE FREE):

INLAND—Rs. 60/-

FOREIGN—US \$ 12/-

SINGLE COPY—Rs. 20/-

AMRTA VĀRTĀ

General Rules

The journal is published in four separate editions—Bengali-English: Hindi-English: Gujarati and purely English—in the months of January, April, July and October. The year will begin from January.

The journal will mainly publish articles relating to Sri Ma. Other informative articles on religious literature and Saints and Teachers of any country or religion will also be welcome.

Writings from devotees about their own experiences, not entirely personal or private, throwing some light on Sri Ma's behavioural pattern with people who came close to her, are also specially invited.

All articles must be clearly written, preferably typed, on one side of the sheet only and sent either directly to the Managing Editor or to any one on the Editorial Board.

Subscriptions to be sent in advance either by Money Orders or through Bank Drafts drawn in favour of "Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha."

All correspondence regarding the journal and subscriptions to be sent to :

**The Managing Editor, Amrita Varta
Mata Anandamayee Ashram
Bhadaini, Varanasi-221001**



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MATRI-VANI

Without fail pray to God, He drives away all sorrows.

* * *

Rest assured the will of the Almighty reigns supreme. At all times rely wholly on him.

* * *

It is man's duty ever to meditate upon the One Reality.

* * *

He should let his thoughts dwell on God as much as possible. His feelings are fine and he expresses them in beautiful sweet sounding words. But does he practise Japa and read the Gita regularly ? He would do well to devote some time daily to the study of Scriptures.

* * *

Such is the Will of the Almighty. Verily, whatever comes to pass is an expression of His Will. Abiding in patience perform your duty. Depend on God absolutely and hold Him in remembrance, Him and Him alone !

* * *

It is possible to practise God's Name under the most adverse circumstance. He causes everything to happen and hence is ever near.

* * *

Silent Japa should be engaged in at all times. One must not waste or breathe uselessly : whenever one has nothing special to do one should silently practise Japa in rhythm with one's breathing—in fact this exercise ought to go on continually until doing Japa has become as natural as breathing.

* * *

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It is of great value to read sacred texts and books of wisdom. Speak the truth. Bear in mind that God's Name is He Himself in one form—let it be your inseparable companion. Try your utmost never to remain without Him. The more intense and continuous your efforts to dwell in His presence, the greater is the likelihood of your growing joyful and serene. When your mind becomes quite vacant atleast try to fill it with the awareness of God or His contemplation.

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Let the thought of God remain with you and do service with the conviction that while serving whomsoever it may be, you are serving the ONE, who alone exists.

*

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*

When there is constant effort to grow into awareness of THAT, which IS, there is hope that in time this awareness may become permanent.

*

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Always keep yourself in a state which is favourable to contempeation of the Divine. Thus the right sustenance for the mind will be provided.

*

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*

One should attempt to dwell in the thought of the Supreme without a break. Then only full enlightenment may come.

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*

Put your trust in God and let your mind be engaged in Japa and meditation.

*

*

*

At every moment sustain the flow of His Name and the consciousness of His presence. Never be without Him.



MOTHER

—M. M. GOPINATH KAVIRAJ

II

In the history of mysticism we come across cases of sudden as well as of a gradual process of the on-coming of Light without the intervention of any mediating agency. The illumination differs, of course, in kind, quality and degree in each case. The self-evolved gnosis of the *Akalpita Yogī* stands also on a similar footing. But we must bear in mind that all this is a result of an intensive action of grace. For from a careful study of work on mystic theology, especially of the *Tantras*, it appears that there are three degrees of grace in respect of its intensity, viz. high, medium and low, each of these being sub-divided into three similar classes. Thus in a general way we may speak of nine degrees in all, the first being the most intense and the ninth the mildest. The second degree of grace under this classification would by its descent enable the recipient soul to have self-knowledge without the aid of an external Guru. It purges and transforms the soul instantaneously. What is technically known as *Anupāya* or *Śāmbhava Upāya* belong to this class. Here the *Upāya* or means is no other than the Supreme Power itself or its first manifestation as the Cosmic will. It is certainly higher than *jñāna* as well as *kriyā*. But it is nonetheless a means to an end and not an end in itself and is intended to convert an animal soul or *paśu* into the divine Self or *Śiva*. Its sole objective is to divinise the soul or rather to reclaim it into its divine status which lay always inherent within itself

Mother's self-knowledge, as already pointed out, is not easily explicable on the analogy of the cases referred to above. It cannot be interpreted in terms of the experiences of saints and sages. Hence the difficulty of estimating Mother's personality. We cannot ignore the fact that She was never subject to ignorance and the question of having grace even in its highest degree can never arise in Her case. She played the role of a *sādhikā* in Her earlier years, no doubt, and during this period She seemed to have passed through all the stages of a real *sādhikā*. In this play She started with ignorance and proceeded through various austerities, observing silence, regulating diet, practising *japa* and yogic exercises and performing *pūjā* and other similar rites. Dawn of knowledge formed also a part of this play.

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A sense of agony and dryness of the soul followed by the bliss of union had their own places in this self-enacted drama. The whole affair was an imitation of *sāadhanā* and it was so arranged that it had all the air of naturalness in it. Her self-knowledge, fortified in its unshakable purity, stood behind this play of self-assumed ignorance and the dramatic impersonation of an ordinary *sādhikā* in quest of supreme Realization. One should not take it as an illustration of divided self and of its activities, it is rather the outcome of an eternally vigilant and self-conscious will playing the double part of impersonation of a *sādhikā* passing through the shadows and lights of a disciplined life, and of the still witness behind observing and directing its own play on the stage.

Some people are inclined to regard Mother as an *Avatāra* or incarnation of a god or goddess. This view, whatever its merits may be, is supposed to be free from the difficulties noted in the earlier view. But what is an *Avatāra* ? It is the descent of Energy to the earth level from the pure causal plane with the object of bringing order into a troubled world, establishing righteousness and restoring moral balance to humanity. The Energy which comes down to an *Avatāra* is distinguished from what descends to a man on the ground, that its connection with the source remains unbroken, whereas in the case of a man it is discontinued. Notwithstanding this, its relation with the source is like that of a part with the whole, and even when the descending Energy is continuous with the source, it is only a projection and nothing more. The original source lies outside the field of the descended energy. The very expression *Avatāra* means descent and presupposes a higher source from which the descent is made. All the *Avatāras* as such have their respective centres, their proto-types so to say, in the *Para Vyoman* (Highest Heaven) or *Mahā Vaikuṇṭha* and these are different modes of the Central Energy of the World Administrator.

We are not concerned here with the particular god or goddess of which She is claimed to be an *Avatāra*. The difficulty is everywhere the same. Even if the god or goddess be taken to be divine in essence the difficulty remains. Knowing Mother through personal contact in the light of what She says about herself indirectly from time to time I cannot bring myself to believe that this view would solve the difficulty. If *Avatāra* is understood in the sense in which a Buddhist would consider a *Nirmāṇa Kāya* in relation to *Dharmakāya* it would be a different matter. But even then some difficulty would persist.

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If the *Nirmāṇa Kāya* is considered to be a projection of *Dharmkāya*, the difficulty of *Avatāravād* would remain as before. If the absolute unity of all the *Kāyas* of the Buddha is recognised as a fact, the difficulty may perhaps be removed to some extent. We should then be left with the supposition of the *Ādi Buddha* as it were and not with any of the historical Buddhas appearing in time. In the case of a historical Buddha we have a long history of strenuous *sādhana* extending over a series of successive lives with a view to eradicate the fundamental obscurations and cultivate the basic virtues and seeds of knowledge. As a result of this, the historical Buddha was endowed with fourfold knowledge, viz, *Ādarśa Jñāna*, *Samantā Jñāna*, *Prātya-vekṣā Jñāna*, and *Kṛtyanuṣṭhāna Jñāna*. In Mother all these types of *Jñāna* are believed to exist from the very beginning. Of these the first kind means a general vision of all things of all times without any let or hindrance. It is like a mirror reflecting on its bosom the entire creation. The second kind refers to realization of the essential equality or sameness in all beings. The third variety of *Jñāna* enables one to have a sense of absolute certainty in regard to everything in existence. The fourth *Jñāna* has a bearing on the world and it is good and is devoted to the service of humanity. It is a knowledge of manifesting an infinite number of *Nirmāṇa Kāyas* in response to the different needs of different persons.

Some people are disposed to look upon Mother as a *Vilāsa*, a self-projection in time and space of the Timeless Divine. I do not know how far this view is tenable. If the conception *Nārāyaṇa* (of *Vaikuṇṭha*) as a *Vilāsa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (of *Goloka*) be the true conception of *Vilāsa*, which involves loss of power and knowledge in relation to the original, we shall find it difficult to explain her own statement regarding Herself like the following :—

"Yet here the aforesaid holds good, for this body responds strictly to the line of thought and to the spirit in which a question is asked. Consequently, what is the opinion of this body and what is not ? If there is a line of approach there must be a goal to which it leads and beyond that is the unattainable. But where the distinction between the attainable and the unattainable does not arise, is THAT Itself. What you hear depends on how you play the instrument. For this body the problem of difference of opinion in no wise exists."*

This statement cannot apply to a *Vilāsa* for obvious reasons.

* Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma, p. 119.

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Is She then the Divine in its *Svayaṃ Rūpa* in its plenary and perfect Form ? Is She then a visible expression of the Absolute Itself ? Is She the outer manifestation, within a self-imposed veil, of the Inner *Ātmā* of the world, of all of us, revealed to us clothed in a human form simply to draw us towards Herself away from the turmoils and tumults of fettered existence ? Who can say ?

It is believed by some that Mother has come down on a definite mission, viz. to awaken divine consciousness in man and bring love and peace into the present world. But some deny this on the ground that Her actions are purposeless in the sense that they are actuated by Divine Will directly and not by a personal will of Her own as an ordinary individual. In any case it seems clear that a descent or manifestation so remarkably great as this cannot fail to have a great consummation in its own course. She never claims to be a Teacher, though She sometimes seems to function as such indirectly, for the Teacher is one who has the limitation of teachership attached to him on account of his pure *vāsanā*. But Mother is free from every kind of *vāsanā* as such from the very beginning. She claims to be Herself alone nothing more and nothing less. In a sense She is perhaps the very Truth which the Teacher promulgates.

We are often told that Mother has no mind and no body. The meaning of the statement does not seem to be clear, at least to some of us. To me it means that the statement is intended to convey the sense that as an ordinary body or physical organism together with its term of existence as a vehicle of worldly experience is due to one's prior *karmas* maturing for fruition and having their roots in ignorance. Mother on account of Her immunity from these causal factors cannot be said to bear the burden of such a body and of such a mind. It means that even a pure body and a pure mind cannot be really attributed to a person who is eternally free from ignorance and karma*.

* It is evidently for this reason that the human body of *Sākya Muni* was pronounced illusory in the ancient Buddhist work, *Saddharma Puṇḍarika*. The view of this work on the life and achievement of Gautama Buddha has been ably summed up by Poussin and is reproduced below : "Although completely divine, Sākya Muni is not God, he is Buddha from the beginning, he is the father of the worlds, the father of the future Buddhas and Saints, the universal Providence in order to save human beings and to lead them to *Nirvāṇa*. He appears in a human form which is illusory; he is born, teaches and enters *Nirvāṇa*—at least as far as ordinary men can see; but in reality, while illusory Sākya Munis are appearing in this world, the true Sākya Muni reigns on a divine 'mountain of vultures surrounded by future Buddhas and imparting to them the true teaching, the true law.' Even the true *Sākya Muni*, according to the teaching of *Saddharma Puṇḍarika*, though eternal and divine is not God.

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In all cognate schools of Indian thought we are familiar with a similar conception of the relation between *karma* and body. In Jainism, for instance, we are told that *Jīvan mukti* follows on the wake of the cessation of what is called *ghātī* or obscuring karma, viz. *karma* which deludes, obstructs and obscures knowledge and intuition. But *aghātī karma*, which gives rise to experience of pleasure and pain, determines one's term of life and status and builds one's body, continues. Even a *Tirthaṅkara* is not immune from this. When even these are destroyed there is an absolute cessation of *karmas* and the body ceases to exist. It is a bodiless state of *Ātmā*. *Kevala Jñāna* emerges at the end of *ghātī karma* which implies the end of impure mind (and of impure body) while Perfection arises at the end of *aghātī karma* which means the cessation of pure body and pure mind as well.

Similarly in Buddhism we find that an Arhat or Jīvanmukta is liberated from *kleśas* and is consequently free from a defiled mind. But this is not an essential character of Arhat, for even a person in Nirodha *Samādhi* as one in the meditation on nothingness or a *Vītarāga* or an *ānāgāmī* has his lower mind inhibited (though not cleansed, as it reappears on reawakening). The lower mind is held in abeyance. *Arhat* has to experience the fruits of his earlier *karmas*. Maudgalāyana, for instance, was a great yogi, the greatest perhaps among Buddha's disciples, and yet he was tortured and his body cut to pieces by robbers and even the bones were powdered. Buddha explained that this was a retribution of a heinous *karma*, viz. patricide committed by him in an earlier life.

How then are we to account for what appears like Mother's body and mind ? May they not be due to an act of the Supreme Will playing in its freedom, or to the same Will in response to the cumulative *karmas* of humanity crying out for ages for a Divine Appearance ? It comes to this, then Mother's body is no body and Her mind is no mind in the ordinary connotation of terms. They are only apparent and exist for the ignorant who are under *māyā* and unable to see behind the veil. This is a docetic view to be sure, but there seems to be no escape from it. Did we not hear of it in connection with the Buddha's body and also the body of Jesus Christ ? Did not Śrī Kṛṣṇa too say that he did not really take any birth and had no *karma* of his own like ordinary men and that his birth and *karma* were both divine in nature ?

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Mother herself said once as to whether the persistence in consciousness of a body is consistent with the dawn of knowledge :

"For a Self-realized Being neither the world with its pairs of opposite exists, nor does the body. If there is no world there can obviously be no body either !

Who says the body exists ? There is no question at all of name and form. To wonder whether a realized Being sees anything outside of himself is also beside the point. Who is there to whom he can say : 'Give, give' ? Yet this state of wanting is precisely the reason for one's belief in the reality of the body. Therefore, since there is no world and no body, there can be no action either; this stands to reason. To make it quite clear : after Self-realization there is no body, no world and no action—not even the possibility of these—nor is there such an idea as 'there is not'. To use words is exactly the same as not to speak; to keep silent or not is identical—all is THAT alone."

This is in regard to persons who have awakened to eternal life from the torpor of worldly existence. It is equally applicable certainly with a greater force to those who have never been in that existence.

(To be continued)

MOTHER AND THE SUPERNATURAL POWERS

—SRI VIJAIANANDA (DR. A. WEINTROB)

Many people are attracted towards the spiritual path or eager to come in contact with saints and sages by the lure of psychic powers. Frequently we have been asked by outsiders whether Mother performs miracles. This childish attitude towards the 'beyond' generally changes when people become more familiar with spiritual things. All miracles are within the realm of the illusory world (*māyā*) and thus subject to relativity. For example to fly in the air, a normal thing for a bird, becomes a miracle when achieved by a human being. In any case, the Power that has brought into being this relative universe can also alter its details or the whole of it : and this Power resides in all living things and by its mere presence constantly performs the miracle of dynamic life.

But let us examine the problem from the ordinary (*vyavahāric*) point of view in order to reply to the question whether Mother performs miracles. It is a well-known fact that at a certain stage of development Yogis are able to accomplish all sorts of feats that strike the imagination of the ordinary man. This is brought to its culmination in what is called the state of *hiranyagarbha*, when one has mastered the cosmic *prāṇa* and is identified with it. But this is by no means the final goal; all sages insist that psychic powers are only obstacles on the way and that to make use of them would block the road to further progress.

Great *bhaktas* also are able to perform miracles. Their personal will having been completely surrendered to God, they are not bound by psychic powers. In their case a miracle may be wrought by the Divine Will sometimes even without their being aware of it. As regards the full-blown *jñāni*, who is perfectly established in the Real, there is no reason for him to be interested in changes within the illusory world, that is to say, in substituting one kind of illusion for another.

Mother cannot be called a *yogini*, although during the period of Her life when She played the role of a *sadhika*, She passed in an extraordinarily short span of time through all the stages and varieties of *Yoga*, right to their final perfection. Nor may we call Her a *bhakta*, although this too has been part of Her *līlā* of *sādhana*, for in the state of Oneness there is no worshipper nor any object of worship. Moreover from the point of view of Her devotees She is Herself the object of worship.

She is no doubt: a perfect *jñāni* and a liberated being, but not in the ordinary sense of these words. For to have attained to *jñāna* one must first have been in *ajñāna*, to be liberated one must first have been in bondage. Mother has Herself indubitably declared that She has

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never been in the state of ignorance and bondage, except as a matter of play during a period of Her *līlā* of *sādhana*. An M.A. who plays as appearing for Matriculation does not thereby cease to be an M.A. As regards miracles it seems inappropriate to say that Mother has supernatural powers : for Her there is no difference between the natural and the supernatural and what we style as miracles comes to Her as naturally as to us eating or walking. Many saints and sages of the past have performed miracles in a spectacular manner in order to convince people of their spiritual attainment or their divine mission. Nothing of this kind has ever been noticed in Mother's case. When asked about some supernatural happening She looks unattached and almost unconcerned. The reason I believe to be that She considers psychic feats as what they really are—trifling things. Furthermore it is my own (no doubt limited) opinion that Mother does not perform the miracles Herself. Let me make this clear: Mother, who is so near to our hearts is the same Mother as that Being spoken of in the Scriptures: free from the taints of birth and rebirth, all-knowing, all-powerful, pure Consciousness, etc. This Consciousness does not act by Itself, but through the medium of its *māyā*, its *shakti*; it is not Mother who performs the miracles, but Her *shakti*, at Her slightest wish or indication—as a King has just to say one word or make a sign to his minister and he knows that the work will be done to perfection, he may even ignore the details and the way in which it is being done.

But let us leave the field of speculation and see how in daily life Mother plays with the so-called supernatural, for no other purpose than our spiritual benefit and from no other motive than Her infinite mercy.

1

Curing diseases is the first thing a layman expects a sage to be able to do. Amongst the crowds surrounding Mother one might discover a good number of people who have come in the hope of being relieved from a disease which doctors have failed to cure. But let people approach Her from any motive, in whatever way their relationship with Her may begin, it will sooner or later lead them to the right path.

When an unperfected *yogi* uses his power to heal, he may possibly create disturbances in the patient. Diseases sometimes prove helpful to spiritual progress or else protect the aspirant from some other greater evil. Besides they happen by the law of *karma* and if removed the reaction will be felt in another way. But Mother knows the source of everything and when someone is cured by Her grace—as it frequently happens—the results of the *karma* (*karma phal*) are cut out by their roots. Almost each one of Her devotees will be able to relate at least one case where Her grace has relieved him from some illness, be it a

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most severe disease (as in the case of the leper cured in Ambala in 1951) or perhaps just an ordinary rheumatic pain.

Sometimes when the disease is likely to be helpful She may shift it on to a period when the individual will be able to bear it more easily and get the maximum benefit out of it.

2

Even the Angel of Death has to obey Her. Only quite recently I heard about a devotee who was to die while on tour in America. But by Mother's grace his death was postponed until he returned to his family in India, where he finally expired. I am told by a reliable person that Mother has confirmed this fact.

3

What first strikes people who come in contact with Mother, is Her extraordinary power to captivate human hearts. Some *sādhakas*, especially those following the *tāntric* path acquire in the first stages the power to charm people. This power is rooted in the vital being. Others in whom the *satwa guna* predominates, attract people by a natural charm emanating from their body.

But Mother's attraction is of quite a different nature. It is the reflection of our own true Self, the Atman that shines through Mother's physical frame.

4

As soon as we come in contact with Mother, at the first glance She sees our minds from the most secret subconscious level up to our superficial social personality, as easily as we may read from an open book. Whenever we come into Mother's presence She immediately knows our state of mind, why we feel worried or pleased etc. It often occurs that someone having asked Mother a question mentally, will get the reply either uttered audibly by Her or in any other way, depending on the circumstances. To tell Her a lie or to try to conceal something from Her is to act like the ostrich that hides its head in the sand. All this has been said from the ordinary point of view, for in reality Mother has no need to read our minds—She is ourselves.

5

Seeing and hearing from a distance: Mother has herself said:* "Just as at a flash of torch-light your faces gleam forth in bold outlines, all your facial expressions appear in my mind when you meditate on me or talk about me or pray to me....." Many of us have

* See "Mother as seen by Her Devotees," p. 115.

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experienced that prayers addressed to Mother mentally and from any distance receive a response; that She has an amazing knowledge of what we do most secretly. As regards our sadhana for instance, She at times discloses in private or public things which we believed nobody could possibly know.

6

Our thoughts, our attitude of mind, our moods at certain periods which may last for several days are based on definite types that have their root in the flow of the *Prāṇic* energy (life force) in our bodies. Mother can at will change that root and thereby our whole attitude of mind.

7

The world that we perceive with our senses is only a part of the manifested universe. The sages say that there are other planes, six higher than the physical plane and seven nether worlds. Mother has often told us how beings invisible to ordinary eyes come to pay their respects to Her. In the life of the Lord Buddha it has also been recorded that *Devas* came into His presence.

8

Sometimes, if necessary, Mataji may manifest Herself far away from Her physical body, in a subtle body. Some of Her devotees have actually felt Her presence in *sukshma*.

9

We read in the Bible how Christ performed the miracle of feeding a multitude with a small amount of food. On several occasions, when Mataji was distributing prasād a small quantity was found sufficient for a large number of people.

It happens, while distributing fruits, for example the number of fruits tallies exactly with that of the persons present. In some cases when there appeared to be a shortage of one fruit, it was found out later that one person had received a double share and that this had a special significance.*

10

Everything that Mother does is infallible (*amogha*) and bears the touch of perfection even to the slightest details. Suppose She cooks some food, it is always most delicious—not even the best cook would be able to equal it; if She distributes fruits and sweets they are of the best type and according to the taste of the recipient; if She presents us with some cloth it

* See Ananda Varta, Voi. IV/3, p. 251-52.

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will be just at the moment we need it and exactly the kind we were wanting; when She sings, it is always in perfect rhythm and tune. I have never seen Mother play a musical instrument except once, a few months ago, when She took a pair of cymbals (*Kartal*) into Her hands and began to play with such skill and perfection, as no human being would be able to do.

The atmosphere of the miraculous around Mother has impressed me ever since the very first day that I have met Her. It is a daily experience in our relationship with Mother.

11

Mother can call down rain or stop it at will. When She toured South India in 1952, Madras Province had been suffering from acute scarcity of rain for a prolonged period. I was present when a delegation came and prayed to Mother to bring about rainfall. No sooner had Mother and Her party crossed over the area of South India on our way back, it began to rain in great abundance in Madras Province. This was reported in the newspapers.

12

Almost everyone of Mother's devotees will be able to recount at least one or two miracles that Mother has wrought for him or in his presence.

But the most wonderful miracle that She performs and the least apparent is that of the purification and transformation of our minds and hearts. Mother has repeatedly declared that in actual fact there is no need for us to "become" liberated: we are already free. The only thing that has to be done is to remove the obstacles that veil Reality, namely to purify the mind.

Many aspirants can bear witness as to how Mother helped them on this 'razor edge' path—not only the way every *Guru* does, but in a miraculous way, obliterating in a few days obstructions that would normally have required long years of strenuous efforts to be overcome. Sometimes even, identified with the *sādhaka* She may carry him across an obstacle, like a Mother lifting her child up in her arms.

The miracle of inner transformation is the true miracle—for this alone we should pray to Mother.*

* Courtesy : Ananda Varta, Vol VI., 140-2.

AMARA VĀNI*

[Translated by Atmananda]

Question: You say all moments are contained in that One Supreme Instant. I cannot understand this.

Mataji : By the instant of one's birth one's experience of life is conditioned; but the Supreme Instant that is revealed in the course of Sadhana leads to the completion of action, to the exhaustion of one's Karma. You should understand that one who is engaged in actions is subject to the workings of nature (*Prakriti*). The constitutive elements of nature are called *Gunast* because they multiply themselves; for this world is not eternal. The perception of the world that consists of the three *Gunas* is in time and transitory and looked at from this point of view it can be recognized as perishable. Desirelessness (*Vairagya*) can consume only that which is combustible, Divine Love and Devotion dissolve only that which is soluble. But the moment in which there is neither burning nor dissolving—that Moment is eternal. To try and seize that Moment is all you have to do. In reality this is That—all that is perceived is He—how can He be apart from anything? This is so when one has entered the stream, and then present, future and past are no longer separate. A Yogi can get something that is on the other side of a wall merely by stretching out his hand. When this is possible the wall is not there although it exists, and even if no wall exists yet it is there. Behind the veil lies Reality, but before you is the veil. The veil was not there previously, nor will it be in the future and hence it does not really exist now. In a certain state it is like this.

You should understand that the yogic process due to which the eye has no power to hamper the free activity of a Yogi is analogous to the method by which an ordinarily invisible object is perceived by him, (both being due to the fact that the Yogi is in touch with the All-pervading Reality). Furthermore, motion and rest, although each remaining what it is, lose their distinction for one who has right vision; in that state there are unlimited possibilities. But this body does not tell everything at all times. All this belongs to the realm of the marvellous.

To return to the moment : the moment that you experience is distorted, whereas the Supreme Moment contains stability, non-stability, everything—yet all these are there and at the same time not there. And then there is a further state in which the question of the Supreme Moment and the fragmentary moment will not occur.

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* The Bengali original appeared in 'Ananda Varta', Vol. II, No. 4.

** The work 'guna' means 'to multiply' as well as 'quality'.

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When later the topic of the moment was raised again, Mataji said :

Mataji : Moment means time, but not what you call time. Time (*samaya*) means *svamaya*, that is to say everything is seen as the Self alone—Where nothing whatsoever can exist outside of the Self.

Question : You say there is stability (*Sthiti*) within motion (*Gati*) and motion within stability. What does this mean?

Mataji : When the seed becomes united with the earth, when the two have mingled, at that moment there is motionlessness. But the process of germination sets in immediately after and this surely implies motion. Motion (or movement) means not to remain in one place. Nevertheless it was in one and the same place—why was?—it still is. Each stage in the growth of a tree represents a point of stability, yet it is also passing. Again the leaves grow and then fall off, which is not the same state : it is and it is not, for after all it is of the one tree. The tree potentially contains the fruit, this is why it will yield it—'it will' means 'it does.' No simile is ever perfect in all respects.

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On another occasion, when referring to the moment, Mataji said :

Mataji : In reality all along there is nothing but the one Moment. Just as one single tree contains numberless trees, innumerable leaves, infinite movement and unbroken stability, so does one instant contain an infinite number of instants and within all these countless instants lies the one single Instant. Look, now, at this very moment there is motion as well as rest. Why then should you have to concern yourself with the revelation of the Moment ? Because misled by your perception of difference you think of yourself and of each and every thing in the world as apart from the rest. This is why for you separateness exists. The sense of separateness in which you are caught, that is to say the moment in which you are born, determines your nature, your desires and their fulfilment, your development, your spiritual search—everything. Consequently the instant of your birth is apart from that of your mother's and from that of your father's birth and your temperament are different from theirs.

Each one of you in accordance with your own particular line of approach, must seize the time, the moment that will reveal to you the eternal relationship by which you are united to the Infinite : this is the revelation of Supreme Union. (*Mahayoga*). Supreme Union means the whole universe is within you and you are in it and moreover there will be no more

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occasion to speak of the universe, (for it will then no longer exist). Whether you say it exists or does not exist, or that it is beyond both existence and non-existence, or even beyond that—as you please : the important thing is that it should become revealed, be it in whatever form.

Having found that Moment, that Time, you will have gained the capacity to know your Self. To Know your Self would imply the realization of the moment of the birth of your father and of your mother and not only of your parents but of the entire universe. It is that Moment which links up the whole of creation. For to know yourself does not mean to know your body only, it signifies the full revelation of THAT which eternally IS,—the Supreme Father, Mother, Beloved, Lord and Master—the SELF. At the moment of your birth you were in ignorance, but when you have caught the Supreme Moment you suddenly come to know who you really are, and at that instant, when you have found your Self, the whole universe will have become yours. By receiving one seed one has potentially received an infinite number of trees. Therefore you have to capture the One Supreme Moment, the realization of which will leave nothing unrealized.

The sense of want, of emptiness (*abhāva*) and one's true being (*svabhāva*) are in exactly the same place—in fact they are THAT and THAT alone. What is this 'sense of want' and what 'true being' ? He and nothing but He. For the simple reason that there is one single seed, which is the tree as well as the seed as well as all its various processes of transformation —truly the ONE alone. You attempt to appease want by want, hence want does not disappear and neither does the sense of want. When man awakens to the acute consciousness of this sense of want, then only does spiritual inquiry become genuine. You must bear in mind that when the sense of want becomes the sense of the want of Self Knowledge then only the real Quest begins. Whether you call it the One, the Two, or the Infinite, whatever anyone may say, all is well.

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Mataji : This was said because of the limitation that is the individual's very nature. If someone still sees bondage (which implies duality), how can he be called 'liberated' ? For the liberated there is no such thing as seeing another. Although there is a state (of achievement) where seeing another still exists, can there in reality be a question of liberation and bondage ?

AMARA VĀNI

You, with your head, your hands, feet, fingers and toes, with all the different parts of your body are one single living being. Yet again, you may think of yourself not as one individual, but a conglomeration of innumerable entities, for in every pore of your skin exist countless living organisms. Moreover you increase and decrease in size, you change in various ways and in each of these conditions you are a different individual. First you were a small infant and now that you have grown up, do you mean to say you are not the same person as that little child ? If you were not, where would be this body of yours ? Do not think this is untrue !

Take the case of your having gone to a place, say for instance 'home', of your going there and of your being already in it. This implies that appearance, existence and disappearance occur together at all times. You should understand that when you raise your foot with the intention of going somewhere you have already left your place and taken up a new one; therein lies movement and stability simultaneously. Expressed from one point of view there is stability in the form of movement, yet on the other hand, you have set your foot—but where ? Where it was, there it is. This is difficult to grasp.

Creation, preservation and dissolution are constantly in process and all of them are within you. Try to fathom the end of yourself, if you can ! You exist, this is why the universe exists : the whole universe is within you. Past and future, this world and the next—indeed everything is contained in you. Therefore inasmuch as—with the entire universe held within yourself—you are free, the fact of your eternal freedom stands revealed and the question of anyone being in bondage does no longer arise. You exist, so the universe exists; this is what has been discussed just now. As was explained by this body the other day, all is contained in everything.

You are wanted and someone calls you by the name of Ram. Someone else objects : "Why do you call him Ram ? We donot see Ram, we see Kamal !" Mind you, this body never tells lies, whatever it utters is the pure, unalloyed truth : just as it is true that you are Kamal, it is equally true that you are Ram. This is so in the state where falsehood is never perceived, where whatever anyone may say is true.

Suppose a man is known under a certain name. At his request he is given another name. Does he become the least bit greater or smaller by assuming a new name ? A person remains as dear with one name as with another. Affection which is born of time may of course increase or decrease, but not because of a change of name. Every man is given a name, but he might just as well have been given a different one. You are just as much Ram as you are Kamal; this is the truth and nothing but the truth. Thus expressed from this

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viewpoint all names and forms and also the formless—whatever is manifest or unmanifest in the universe—is contained in you. To realize one's Self means to realize all things as identical with one's Self. Fundamentally there is HE only; HE, the ONE alone is liberated.

This body says that everything is contained in each and every thing. Take the example of this body losing at times its normal character as regards movement, etc. Suppose this body was going in a particular direction, but suddenly, without any apparent reason, would start moving in another direction. The question why I had changed my course of movement did not arise in the way that you were puzzled at Kamal being addressed as 'Ram'. Really and truly everything is contained in everything; all that has been brought forward just now is to make clear this fact.

Now and again this body talks to you as one speaks either to a very young child or a person of extreme old age; this, in some way, is what is happening also now. In spite of your being quite grown up, this body addresses the child in you, not however out of mistake or error. You say it is incorrect, wrong—but in reality falsehood and error are also HE. There is only the ONE, HE and not other.

Mataji spoke again in reply to another question.

Mataji : The stages of childhood, old age and so forth do not only exist each separately, but also simultaneously and in the same place. He who maintains that two things cannot occupy one and the same place at the same time, has not realized either the ONE or the two and hence how can he realize the Infinite ? In a certain state of being there is no question of the ONE, the two or an infinite number, no question of realization or non-realization—what is, is HE. Realization and the rest are mentioned merely in order to help you to understand. Furthermore he who has realized the ONE has thereby realized the two and the many at one and the same time, in one and the same place.

Why is it that you are constantly haunted by a sense of want ? Because you believe without the least doubt that your want has been fulfilled, while this is not the case. From your standpoint, to say that everything is contained in the ONE, and that the ONE pervades everything, represents a particular angle of vision.

Divinity is complete, whole; nothing whatsoever can be excluded from it. Thus there are and must ever be new expressions according to the varying modes that are being manifested at different times and places. Nothing without exception can be rejected or left out where Truth is revealed in its purity.

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Now Mataji replied to another question.

Mataji : Owing to the fact that your vision is one-sided, you ask "Is the particular a part of the whole or is everything to be found in one place ?" This body maintains that you may put it in any way you like Where everything is present in everything, whether you call it a part or the whole, or whether you say all is in one place—the question of eliminating or ruling out anything simply does not arise, in other words there can be nothing that is barred. What this body utters depends on what and how much you draw out of it at any particular time. The sound you hear is determined by the nature and the amount of what you play on the instrument. Do not imagine that what has been said here represents the opinion of this body. If you declare that this body neither holds nor rejects any doctrine, it is so; but if you say the reverse—whatever you may think, is equally correct.



"Pray that the work done through you, His instrument, may be pure. In every action remember Him, the purer your thinking, the finer will be your work. Your life should be spent in a spirit of service: feel that the Lord is accepting services from you in whatever you do."

—Ma Anandamayi.

THE ALL-PERVADING PRESENCE OF THE MOTHER

--KENNETH GRANT

It is, perhaps, not a matter for remark that extraordinary things sometimes occur in circumstances involving Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma, but I would like to place the following event on record as showing Mother's omniscience and omnipresence concerning one who has not contacted Her in the physical at all, not even through correspondence.

The following event may seem trivial to those to whom long association with Mother has revealed many such events of a truly miraculous and marvellous nature. It must be remembered, however, that to one living in England where these events are conspicuous by their absence, and which is as remote from Mother's physical presence as may be, such an event stands out as a singular and inspiring witness to an occult order of things which no amount of materiality may afford even to deaden, much less then to destroy.

Having spent an evening perusing and contemplating certain numbers of the Magazine, *Ānanda Vārtā*, I had retired for the night, my mind quite naturally attuned to thoughts of Mother and Her infinite Grace.

Having a particular and distressing problem at the back of mind which welled forth into the forecourts of consciousness in the lucidity preceding sleep, I decided that I would submit my perplexity to Mother and seek Her advice.

It is to be noted that there was no conscious formulation of prayer designed with the purpose of creating a link or channel between Mother and myself, through which She might pour the healing streams of Her Grace; on the contrary, there was a distinct feeling, or decision of postponing the matter till the morrow, when I would either compose a letter describing the problem, or, more subtly, ask directly of Mother, and within myself, that She give me the strength to dispel my perplexity, enshrining my plea in some sort of prayer or formula or incantation, I had not even made up my mind which it was to be.

Imagine my amazement, then, on waking next morning to receive a letter from one of Her devotees in India, one whom, She has Herself named Suddha Priya, wherein was contained an answer to my unformulated plea—an answer, note well, that must have been given long before I had thought even of approaching Mother concerning my problem, an answer somehow implanted in the mind of another devotee with the express purpose of having that devotee convey same to me in the manner in which it happened. Needless to say,

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my correspondent had not been informed in any way either by Mother or by myself as to the state of my mind which was known to none other during the time the letter was conceived, written down and despatched.

Mother's ways are truly mysterious. Such an event, quite apart from the problem or the answer thereto, has had the effect of conferring that most valuable of all boons, the certainty of the unity of existence, i.e. the absolute conviction that Guru and Chela are one, and that if we could only and at all times enter and abide in the deep recesses of Being, where alone is the true Undifferentiated Consciousness, we could always know That, which being known everything is known. And whether a problem is trivial or great, such distinctions of degree altogether vanish in that union of the individual soul with the Infinite Life which, for the sake of convenience and of our limited and finite understanding, we lovingly refer to simply as..... Mother !*

"By constantly endeavouring to live a life of self-dedication, self-surrender will come about one day. What does self-surrender mean, if not to surrender to one's very own Self."

—Ma Anandamayi

* Courtesy : Ananda Varta, Vol III, 140-3.

MY DAYS WITH SRI ANANDAMAYI MA

—BITHIKA MUKERJI

The Advent of Sri Ma in our lives :

In the summer of 1937, Sri Ma passed through the town of Bareilly more than once, on her ceaseless travels from the foothills of the Himalayas to the remote villages of Bengal, and back again to start on the pilgrimage to Mount Kailash.

Bareilly is a town which lies at the junction of the many of routes toward the hill-stations of the northern region. At this time Maharatanji, as she was known in the Ashram, was living in Bareilly. Her husband Sardar Balwant Singh Jaspal was posted in Bareilly and she was known to our family as Mrs. Jaspal. One day she and my mother happened to be occupying adjacent chairs in the Ladies Club. Maharatanji asked my mother (Mrs. Mukerji, to her) if she would like to have *darshan* (audience, seeing) of a Bengali Mataji who was expected very soon and would be staying at Dharmashala (wayside inn for pilgrims) near the Railway Station. Probably Maharatanji thought my mother would be interested as she too was a Bengali.

My mother hesitated, because in those days it was not at all an accepted code of behaviour for ladies to go to wayside inns to pay homage to people claiming spiritual power. When my father was approached in this matter, he raised no objection to my mother's satisfying her curiosity, but declined to accompany her. Mrs. Jaspal's fourth daughter, Kamala was a classmate of my elder sister Renudi. In school one day Renudi had seen a photograph in Kamalaji's book, which appeared to her, to be that of a disoriented person. This was one of Sri Ma's photographs in a state of samadhi. Kamalaji whisked it away, not caring for my sister's reaction, very understandably so. They had known Sri Ma for more than one year by this time and were very attached to her.

In later years my mother told us that she would wait impatiently for us to leave for our schools and my father for the court (he was the Civil Judge in Bareilly) so that she could go to the Dharmashala and stay there the whole day. She would return just before it was time for all of us to come back home. Asked about her first impressions, she was not able to express herself clearly, only that she seemed to have arrived at the end of all her desires. She had felt fulfilled.

One day Sri Ma said to her with a smile, "The way your eyes return again and again to the clock, so should your mind be given over to thoughts of God. Even if distracted for a

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while bring it back to God-remembrance continuously." My mother was a bit embarrassed that Sri Ma had noted her clock-watching, but pleased also with this *vāṇī* (utterance); it may be said that she abided by this *vāṇī* scrupulously all her life, even to the last moments of it, because the very last words that my mother uttered a few minutes before her passing away were, "Jai Guru, Jai Ma" (29th September, 1992).

My mother must have taken us with her on a Sunday or in the evenings after school. By 'us' I mean my sister Renudi (15) myself (12) and Bindu (8). My eldest brother was in Allahabad with our grand parents and my youngest brother Babu was still a baby. The Dharmashala was a spacious building with a big central hall and a large courtyard. In the middle of the courtyard, there was a big raised platform with a small Siva temple in the middle.

We used to find Sri Ma sitting in the hall on the floor. There was a wall to wall *duree* (matting) provided by the management. For Sri Ma, there was a narrow piece of blanket covered by a folded sheet, no pillow. She sometimes lay on this bedding, while other pilgrims came and went. Maharatanji was always in attendance. We became great friends with her daughters, all of us looking up to Billoji for guiding us in deportment in these new surroundings. I do not have very clear recollections of our first visit or my first darshan of Sri Ma. Pitaji on the other hand made an instant hit with the bunch of children which seemed to gather in no time in the *dharmashala*. We played Saccidananda with him, sometimes Sri Ma would also join us. The game always ended with the winning party singing kirtan. Pitaji always led the Kirtan, no matter whether he had won or lost. Very soon, he picked out Bindu, from among all the children as his favourite. Bindu's voice was so melodious that it was quite remarkable even at this age. Pitaji would hoist him on his shoulders, so that he could be seen by the crowd and his voice could be heard leading the kirtan.

We know my brother Bindu to be a good singer, but it was Pitaji and Mataji who recognised in him a touch of the special quality of a privileged person. Pitaji was so captivated by his sweet nature and marvellous voice that he remembered to write to him from Almora on their return from Mount Kailasha describing a little of the scenic beauty and mentioning their anxiety regarding Bhajji's illness, and again from Kishenpur. These two letters are prized possessions in our family.

Sri Ma visited Bareilly thrice during this summer. On one of these visits, after Bindu had sung a song for her, she said to him, "Will you sing for me everyday ?" Bindu said in surprise, "But you are going away !" Sri Ma, then said to him, "Give me a time, if you sing at that hour every day, I shall hear you *from wherever I am*. If you cannot sing a whole song, then sing one line or if even that is not convenient, just make a sound with your voice—I shall hear you." After some consultations with my mother, he agreed to the time of

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8 o'clock in the evening. For many years Bindu used to sing at this hour, but alas, as is the way of human frailty, he got out of this habit when he became busy in the world.

My father did not go with us to the Dharmashala. He apparently had said that he was not interested. In any case he had a low opinion of persons who followed the so-called mendicant's way of life. He had presided over too many legal disputations regarding property and misrule in Ashrams and Akharas. To him ochre robes signified irresponsibility, if not downright dishonesty of purpose. So although he raised no objection to my mother's visits, he preferred to go to his club in the evenings for his daily game of tennis.

One evening Bindu developed a high fever. Even so my mother was ready for her visit to the *dharmashala*. My father was annoyed that she should be so uncaring as not even to wait for the doctor who was coming to see the boy. So my mother stayed back home. The doctor was concerned because there was a fear of typhus fever in the town at this time. While all this was going on in our house, somebody brought the news that Sri Ma had come to the officers' enclave and was visiting the house of Mrs. Dixit, which was right next to ours. My mother, joyfully ran to Mrs. Dixit's house. Sri Ma smiled at her and said, "Do you live nearby?" When my mother indicated our house, Sri Ma who was already on her way out of Mrs. Dixit's, walked along with my mother and came to ours, followed by her whole entourage. My mother was beside herself with excitement, asking the servants to fetch chairs and carpets, the gardener to bring flowers and us girls to sing a song of welcome, that is *agomoni*.

Sri Ma sat down in the chair brought out for her. My father came forward and bowing, made a *namaskara* with folded hands. Sri Ma smiled and said, "See, I have come to your house, uninvited."

In the meantime, Billoji, who had gone inside the house for something, saw Bindu in his bed. She picked him up and carried him outside to where Sri Ma was sitting, and put him in another chair, in front of her. He was flushed with fever, but obeying my mother, gasped a few lines of the *agomoni* song along with us. Sri Ma smiled at him and taking the garland from her own neck put it around his. Then it was time to go. Sri Ma went away to visit other houses in the vicinity.

When normalcy returned, the Doctor made his examination and was surprised to find no symptoms of *ailments*, not even a fever. Telling my parents to keep watch for a recurrence of the fever he took his leave. Bindu, however, recovered and my mother was able to continue with her visits to Sri Ma. She was convinced that Bindu had recovered due to Sri Ma's Grace. I do not know what my father thought about it. He was not a credulous man. In later years also, he would be amused by stories of the miraculous. But evidently he was not proof against the all-conquering smile. He came with us to the *dharmashala* and

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made the acquaintance of Bhaiji and Swami Akhandanandaji. Pitaji and Didi Gurupriya, he had already met at our house. He readily revised his opinion regarding people in ochre robes.

One day a whole lot of us went to the Public Garden with Mataji and Pitaji. My father took many group photographs. Pitaji entered into the spirit of this and posed in front of a mango tree, pointing out that the green mangoes should be visible in the background. Even now the photographs are reminders of those joyous days.

Bholanathji or Pitaji, as he was known to us, was tall and handsome, with flowing long hair and beard flecked with shining grey. He had a very out-going personality easily communicating with all the people who came flocking to the *dharmashala*. The kirtan-party of New Delhi came over to Bareilly; we had the rare and unforgettable experience of participating in the special form of kirtan which is their forte. The entire Bengali community of Beharipur turned up for this function. The rather exclusive cadre of officers remained exclusive no longer. They mingled happily with the joyous throng. It was an exhilarating experience. Pitaji was always at the centre of the kirtan; sometimes Sri Ma joined him for short spells.

It goes without saying that we did not grasp all the implications of Sri Ma's presence in our midst at the time. Didi Gurupriya writing about these visits in her Diary (volume IV) expresses her surprise and appreciation of the degree of independence enjoyed by the ladies of these northern towns. She was helped with her shoppings for the coming trek in the Himalayas by these knowledgeable women, sometimes driving their own cars. Mrs. Dixit was, I think, the first person to have the privilege of Sri Ma sitting in the passenger seat while she drove her car. The only other person, in later years, who had this honour was, of course, Bindu. I cannot think of anyone else who had dared to suggest that Sri Ma occupy the passenger seat in front.

Unknowingly we had also participated in another regular feature of Sri Ma's travels. The commingling of different communities happened naturally. The people of different towns came together and many lasting friendships were formed. My father met his cousin Sri Manoj lal Chatterjee, who had come from Delhi with the Kirtan party. When later we went to New Delhi in our turn, we already knew many of the devotees. This is how the family surrounding Sri Ma and Bholanathji grew by leaps and bounds. The people of one town would automatically play host to the visitors, making arrangements for their stay and meals.

I remember Bhaiji as a quiet person keeping away from the centre of activities. I came to know him only because Sri Ma asked me one day to fetch him from where he was standing near the Siva temple in the courtyard of the *dharmashala*. I approached him and

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said, "*Ma āāpnāke dākchen*" (Mother wants you). He came at once and knelt in front of Sri Ma. I do not know what they talked about, but when Bhaiji was about to get up, Maharatanji pleaded with him to sing his song to Sri Ma, that is, '*Jaya hṛdayavasini*'. Bhaiji, I thought, rather reluctantly sang the first four lines and then excused himself and left the hall quickly. I noticed that he backed away from Sri Ma's presence as people do in temples.

During Sri Ma's third visit to Bareilly on her way to Almora, Bhaiji spent a lot of time with my parents. For many years we had thought that my parents had been initiated by him, but this was not so. When we were old enough to ask such questions, my mother answered that although he was not their Guru, he had guided them in many other ways. He had revealed to them something about his own understanding of Sri Ma and had opened up for them a new dimension of human aspirations, it was like the opening of a window in a closed room. Bhaiji, actually had initiated six persons only : Maharatanji, Sevaji and her sister, our own Sadhan Brahmachariji, Sri Nirmal Ghosh of Delhi and Dr. Vijay Ratanji Vyas of Bombay. Our Jogibhai also although not initiated by him had paid him the same respect. He had said that Bhaiji was '*Guru-pratima*' for him.

We did not see Bhaiji again because he passed away in Almora on their way down from the pilgrimage to Mount Kailasha. The whole family of devotees was stunned by this news. The feeling of belonging and nearness was so strong that many people travelled to Almora and later to Dehra Dun to be with Sri Ma and Bholanathji to participate, as it were, in the sense of an irreparable loss. My parents with Renudi and Bindu also went to Dehra Dun. I was at Allahabad at the time.

A new chapter had opened in the lives of our family. It was never the same again.

[To be continued]

[A note of explanation : I was invited to a conference in 1992 in Spain, to speak on Sri Ma Anandamayi as a Mystic Saint of contemporary India. After the conference some people from the audience, came to me and requested me to say something about my personal relationship with Sri Ma. They said, it was not idle curiosity but they wished to know how Ma lived in the lives of her devotees. I was not in a position to stay on in Spain at the time, so I promised I would write 'my autobiography' for them. This booklet, will be translated in Spanish and published in Madrid. In the meantime, it is being serialized in *Amṛta-vārtā* in the hope that devotees in India also will find it interesting.—B. M.]

ĀNANDAMAYĪ MĀ

—PROF. ALEXANDER LIPSKI

There is no question that Ānandamayī Mā is a spiritual giant who rightfully takes Her place among the great saints of modern India, such as Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Ramana Maharshi and Paramahansa Yogananda. Her life is an eloquent testimony to the abiding strength of Indian spirituality. Her message is particularly appropriate in a world where the notion of progress is no longer taken for gospel truth and the whole array of our "modern values" is undergoing an agonizing reappraisal. Ānandamayī Mā diagnoses the present disease of civilization as "over-secularization". She suggests that the cure from our severe illness cannot be brought about by engineers, sociologists or psychologists, but by doctors of the soul. She prescribes a drastic revolution in our views and attitudes from outwardness to inwardness, from materialism to spirituality and from man-centeredness to God-centeredness. Her totally uncompromising transcendent point of view is truly a shock therapy for problem-solving oriented, pragmatic Americans. She shows no apparent concern for the population explosion, environmental pollution, racism, political tensions, economic crises. And yet, as one of Her being is "to demonstrate the existence of a Power that is ever at work creating by Its transforming influence, Beauty out of ugliness, Love out of strife. Such a Power is Śrī Ānandamayī Mā. May she bring peace and harmony into this world of strife."

I first got interested in Ānandamayī Mā while reading about Her in Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*. Subsequently, I met several Americans who had visited Ānandamayī Mā for extended periods of time. In 1965, while spending my sabbatical leave in India, I visited Her ashram in Vārāṇasi and then stayed with Ānandamayī Mā in Rajgir, the capital of an ancient Indian state. When I was brought into the presence of Ānandamayī Mā I felt that, for the first time in my life, I was encountering someone who was the very embodiment of the Holy, the "wholly other." And yet Ānandamayī Mā was also so close and accessible. She immediately welcomed me with a loving smile signifying total acceptance. In Her simple, unaffected way She asked me about my family and with genuine interest looked at the photos of my wife and my three daughters. She then gave me the privilege of sitting near Her. During the ensuing *satsaṅga* I had an opportunity to observe Her at close quarters. I was struck by the youthful almost girlish appearance of the then sixty-nine year old Ānandamayī Mā. It was a delight to listen to Her pearly laughter,

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and I was struck by the ease and assurance with which the almost illiterate Ānandamayī Mā responded to the most recondite questions of erudite scholars. A highlight of my stay with Ānandamayī Mā was my personal interview during which I was alone with Her except for the presence of an interpreter. Facing Mātāji I felt as though I was mentally stripped naked. It seemed to me that She could see into the innermost recesses of my mind. I asked Her to tell me what the chief obstacles on my spiritual path were. In response She revealed to me some glaring shortcomings of which I had been hitherto totally unaware. What she said was in no way flattering, in fact painful, but Ānandamayī Mā said it so compassionately, although firmly, that I did not feel condemned. I realized what true loving detachment was.

The days at Ānandamayī Mā's Ashram flew by. Throughout my stay I had a feeling of utter contentment and peace—worldly problems were temporarily eclipsed. As though in the presence of a gigantic spiritual magnet my mind was engrossed in the divine. When thinking of the blissful experiences in Rajgir, there flashes even now through my mind a scene of a kīrtana with Mātāji. And I hear Her chanting "*Hey Bhagavān*" (Oh, Lord) to the accompaniment of a harmonium. Her chanting is the very expression of divine love and ecstasy and prompts me to echo the words of the Persian inscription on the Diwan-i-Khās :

*If on Earth be an Eden of bliss,
It is this, it is this, none but this.*

While I had a limited knowledge of Hindi at the time of my visit to Ānandamayī Mā I decided then and there to take up the study of Bengali, to be able to become acquainted in depth with the life and teaching of Mātāji. Through the kind assistance of the then Secretary of Shree Shree Ānandamayī Sangha, I was able to procure most of the literature in Bengali and English dealing with Ānandamayī Mā. The more I immersed myself in the life and thought of the bliss-permeated Mother, the clearer it became to me that many people in the west could profit from Her wisdom. When I discussed Ānandamayī Mā during my lectures on modern Hindu religious thought I was impressed by the enthusiastic response of the students who eagerly asked for more information about the bliss-permeated Mother. This prompted me to undertake the task of writing on the life and teaching of Ānandamayī Mā which was a privilege in itself, but I am filled with gladness at the thought that through this study Mātāji will become better known and that many spiritual seekers who have become aware of the emptiness of a mere materialistic existence will find renewed meaningfulness*.



* Courtesy : "Life and Teaching of Ānandamayī Mā" by the same author.

FROM AN INDIAN JOURNEY*

—ASTRID SETTERWALL ANGSTROM

"Try to be aware of all that gives you real joy! That brings you closer to God."

—ANANDAMAYI MA

Late one evening I took a taxi from the hotel where I lived outside of Benares. I had been given the opportunity to be present at a Kirtan in Anandamayi Ma's Ashram. The driver left the car in the main street, for the lanes along which he was going to conduct me were too narrow for a car to pass.

It is dusk. In the small stores that open up towards the lane I see people moving against the warm light of old-fashioned kerosene lamps, Those we meet have to step aside to let us pass. The driver asks for the location of the ashrama. Friendly voices answer him; arms raised out of folded scarves point the direction. The further we walk the more remote I feel from the ordinary ideas of time and space that rule our everyday lives.

Finally we arrive at a fairly big house and enter the patio where the driver settles down to wait. A European lady receives me. She wears a sari as most Westerners who live here do for practical reasons. I am told to take off my shoes and we mount a stair that leads to a loggia which widens into a veranda covered with heavy curtains, making it almost like a room. Inside this veranda, behind light ironwork gates, is a small shrine with large portraits of Anandamayi Ma.

On a large cushion, in front of the gates, the Mother herself is sitting, all dressed in white. In the obscure light I can discern that the face is refined, with almost chiselled features. Her big brown eyes are intensely expressive—as if they held a secret joy in their depths. She radiates a reassured freedom that is owned only by one who has no desires. A friend who knew her in her youth tells me that she used to fall into long states of *samādhi*. It could happen any time when she was busy in her home. Therefore, she could never be left alone. Once she was in such a state for twenty-one days. She was unconscious of her body which had to be nursed and taken care of by others. But nowadays she seems to be constantly

* Translated from the original Swedish.
Courtesy: "Ananda Vārtā"-Vol. XV No. 1.

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living in a state of bliss and at the same time to retain her consciousness of the world around. Even now I hear her joking with those who sit nearest to her and I notice how she bends forward with keen interest to watch the love-play between two large insects on the floor. All the time this indescribable smile lingers on her face.

The veranda has become full of people. Silence falls. Kirtan begins. A number of girls sit together. One of them leads the singing and plays with the accompaniment of a harmonium. At first only she and an elderly man sing together, but later the others join. The girl sings and plays with eyes closed in deep feeling: "Talk of Mother, sing of Mother, repeat the Mother's Name!" The refrain is only "Ma, Ma, Ma"—many, many times. There are several children among us. In front of me sits a tiny, slender boy who joins in the refrain with all the force he has, His whole body rocks in rhythm.

Now and then during the evening a part of the curtains is shoved aside. People enter from the darkness and prostrate before the Mother, adorning her knees and feet with garlands of white jasmines or yellow tagetis, as they would do before the image of the Mother goddess in the temples. Anandamayi Ma does not say anything. She only smiles, the smile that includes everyone and all things,

The song continues. The Mother has been sitting with closed eyes. Now she opens them and calmly directs the glance to each one. It is a glance that penetrates. In this way she gives of her own purity, and she fans the spark of universal life that burns in everyone to a stronger and clearer flame. It is not always words that mean most. Many of the God-inspired ones give of their life in silence. There are others who after twenty or thirty years of silence perhaps put their wisdom into words. I have been told that the Mother does not talk much.

The number of wreaths at the feet of Anandamayi Ma increases all the time. After a while the singing stops. A young man with brightly shining eyes begins to play his Sarod and to sing alone, directing his song to the Mother, whose eyes are resting on him. Apparently there is some fun towards the end of his song because all, including the Mother herself, laughs.

Now she nods to the girls and they begin to sing again, filling the room with praise of the Mother of the Universe who helps in need, the Divine Mother whom we meet in all forms who creates and sustains. She also destroys, but only to create anew, and at the same time She embraces us with merciful arms. Out of Her embrace we step into life on earth; in Her love we live; to her heart we return. The first mantra we learn is "Ma". In many cases it is also our last word. These floating songs, sung with unlimited devotion create their own

FROM AN INDIAN JOURNEY.

atmosphere. I sit on the floor as near as one can be to another being, but here I do not mind the close touch of others. The outside life seems so distant and the strong feeling of oneness with everyone and everything through the Mother is the Real.

After a while Anandamayi Ma rises and walks out on a terrace overlooking the broad, majestic, deep blue Ganga. The silence remains unbroken. The Mother lets her gaze follow the whirling water. Her face is so tender, Her whole personality radiates a secure warmth. There is no exaggerated emotionalism in her. Her sense of humour always comes forth. She is as she is—perfectly natural, charged with life.

The cool evening breeze sweeps around me as I stand before the luminous face of the Mother, I am asked if I would like an interview with her tonight—with the help of an interpreter. No ! Tonight it is not a question of words. Only one thing, I ask for her blessing. Her face seems to me to be very ancient and at the same time radiating youth as she raises her hand to the holy sign.

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I left Benares and was away for more than a week. When I returned, the Mother who never stays long in one place was still there. I found a note in my hotel room saying that if I wanted to see her again I should come to the ashrama at once because she would be leaving in the late afternoon.

The terrace lies bathing in sun. People come and go or sit meditating. A man gives me a sign : "Come now" . I follow him into a room where Anandamayi Ma sits on a bed dressed, as always, in white. I touch the floor with my forehead in greeting. Her eyes meet mine. We smile. Her face is calm, quiet, happy. But our word "happiness" does not render what it expresses. It seems as if her gaze pierces through to that which the eyes of others do not see. It is difficult to tell what one experiences in the presence of a God-intoxicated person, Words limit such experiences that do not have language as their means of expression. She smiles: "You are the Mother and I am your little child ! So it is !" She even tries to say it in English, we laugh . The girls in the room laugh. And all is simple and gay. She touches my forehead and my hands and puts a wreath of yellow flowers around my neck.

She begins to talk. Her clear girlish voice sounds almost like a bird's twittering :

"Through pure concentration all is possible, But the least trace of egotism prevents the spiritual growth. The one who wants to lead a spiritual life must be quite transformed and change all values. The cause of our misery is that we cling to forms and believe them to be real. This we must understand : *Real joy exists only in spiritual life.* The only way to

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experience it is to know and understand what the universe really is. We have to orient ourselves so that we see the whole world divine. It is said in the Upanishad, 'Everything that moves in this world must be covered with the Lord.' Our old world has to go. And instead we shall see the world as it is, see God in all, see how the Divine breaks through names and forms. There is not a place where God is not. The only thing we have to do is to open our eyes and see Him—in good and evil, happiness and unhappiness, in joy and sorrow and in death. One may exchange the word God for life, to be conscious that 'All Life is One' gives a bliss that does not change. If you feel unhappy and restless, it comes from ignorance of this truth, from being rooted in the idea of manifoldness and differences between individuals and things. All, all are only variations of That, which is the Center, which is the One"

"You have been touched by the Mother," my Indian friend says, when I tell her of my visit with Anandamayi Ma. According to the Indian way of thinking, this is very meaningful. One thing is certain. One does not forget Anandamayi Ma. She awakens the consciousness.



"He Himself selects the method by which to draw his children close to Himself, the method that is best suited to each one. Such is His own free and absolute will. "

—Ma Anandamayī

FROM THE NOTES TAKEN IN SHREE MA'S PRESENCE

—'KIRPALJI'

27th December, 1958—Kalkaji Ashram, New Delhi.

Shree Ma was in the hall. Neelu had brought a friend, Sri S. Bandopadhyay to meet Ma.

B. - Why do people come to you ?

Ma - Find out from them. Ask them.

Ma - (To the other) Why do you all come ? (Everyone laughed).

He was talking about the Arctic, where the day & night lasted six months. He spoke about Igloos & Eskimos. He also described his travels in Tibet etc. and repeated his question—Why do so many people come to you ?

Ma - This body is their little child. One who has no one of his own, not even any belonging, has everything.

B. - I have also no one. But no one comes to me.

Ma - You have your job and salary.

B. - In my work I have to tell lies to cover up people etc.

Ma - If you speak the truth, quarrels and fights will cease. You live amidst untruth. Give it up. Live according to the Turth. This is all false—living amidst untruth, you create untruth. Do not proceed in the direction of falsehood.

B. - Does that mean I should stay with you ?

Ma - One who has no one of his own, has no desire. If there's a little child going along and has no one, you feel attracted towards the child. This body has no one.

B. - But I have also no one.

Ma - You have your job. Everyone has something or the other. This body has no one.

B. - I have heard a lot about you. I have been on a number of pilgrimages to Buddhist temples, to Jerusalem, to Tibet, but I have not found peace.

Ma - God is within you.

B. - But I do not find him.

Ma - You search for Him. You are an intelligent person.

B. - That learning is of no use.

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- Ma - Relinquish the useless and search for the eternal.
- B. - I have met a number of Presidents also and talked to them forcefully, but in your presence I am unable to speak in a similar fashion. I am afraid to question you. Your devotees may object.
- Ma - I will restrain them.
- B. - They will think I am a stupid. But I have forgotten what actually I wanted to ask.
- Ma - Do not waste your time on useless pursuits. Do *Gayatri Japa* twice daily.
- B. - But how am I to proceed ?
- Ma - Wait and you will find out. You admit that you feel it is useless. Then renounce that which is useless. Ask them why do they come. This body does not call them. They all come to give darshan. They are God's creation, children of God, one's own. They come to their own. Everyone is one's own. In this entire creation everyone is one's own, those who come personally and those also who do not come.
- B. - I feel a certain happiness, bliss at this time, but I don't know the reason, though I had hardly felt like coming previously.
- Ma - Ask any question you feel like enquiring.
- B. - Can I write about this meeting ?
- Ma - In that connection, this body does not say anything. The only path is in the direction towards God. There is no other way. Where is your home ?
- B. - I have no home.
- Ma - Your home is in God's home. Someone once asked this body, where do you live ? This body replied-The Creator's town (*Brahma Nagar*). Who lives in you house ? This body answered-Divine Bliss (*Atmananda*). One who has nothing and no one, his is the entire Universe. Do *Gayatri* twice daily.
- B. - But if I cannot do it always.
- Ma - If you try, you can accomplish anything. By your efforts you can attain everything. You have passed your B. A.(Bachelor of Arts).
- B. - That is nothing much.
- Ma - Remember God's name. Keep your mind concentrated on the thoughts of God. That is the only reality, all else is futile and full of sorrow. Do you read the Gita ?
- B. - I read it long ago.
- Ma - Read it daily.
- B. - Will something happen then ?
- Ma - You yourself admit that there is some restlessness.
- B. - But I cannot concentrate while reading the Gita.

FROM THE NOTES TAKEN IN SHREE MA'S PRESENCE

- Ma - Questions and doubts do not occur to those who do not study, neither to those who have achieved their goal. But to those who are struggling on the path doubts do come.
- B. - But reading the Gita makes me even more restless and then comes the feeling that this is all useless. Then I feel like running away from it all.
- Ma - Then renounce everything and go where God takes you.
- B. - I have been to Tibet, Germany etc.
- Ma - You will not find it there. You will find it only within yourself. Will you do something ? Will you give me sometime ?
- B. - Certainly.
- Ma - Just give me fifteen minutes wherever you are. Just fifteen minutes. (Ma repeats) These fifteen minutes are to be given to God for ever in order to surrender all 24 hours to the thought and name of God. These fifteen minutes are a beginning. Remember, you will not be able to withdraw these fifteen minutes. Good child.
- B. - What happens to people like me ? I can do other things, if I try, but this I cannot do.
- Ma - The mind does not concentrate, but keep trying and you keep me informed from time to time.
- B. - So many people have advised me, but after doing it for a month or so, it just disappears.
- Ma - That is a great blessing.
- B. - I promise, but I may not maintain it for a length of time. What do the others do ?
- Ma - They make mistakes, but they do not give up. How long have you been working ? In your profession there is no laxity.
- B. - Why does Neelu come to you ? He does not believe in God.
- Ma - Ask him.
- B. - He says, there's an attraction, He sits quietly & even does *stotra path* (religious recitations).
- Ma - The fact that he does not believe in God means he believes in Non-Belief. Everyone is a form of God. He alone is in everyone. He dwells within everyone and each one belongs to God. God alone is all-encompassing. You have come to your own self.
- B. - Why have I come ?
- Ma - Does one bring anything ? One just goes to one's own. It is natural to go to one's own. Unless one goes to God there is no peace. The one who helps on the path towards God is the real friend. Why do you feel you are a sinner ? You must think—I am the offspring (child) of the Eternal Divinity—I am Immortal.

GRACE, GRACE, GRACE, NOTHING BUT GRACE

—DR. SAROJ PALIWAL

It was nothing but Ma's 'Grace and Grace' alone that made me travel to U.K. last summer, with a view to disseminating Ma's divine message far and wide at the invitation of my elder daughter Nilima Harjal, working as producer in B.B.C., London. As inspired, we planned to visit the International Ashram of Arnaud Desjardins, who has beautifully displayed Ma's radiant photographs all over his ashram, which is some 200 km. away from Argnon towards the south of France. Here one may easily trace out the impending impact of the *mantra*- 'Grace, Grace, Grace Nothing but Grace' alone, where God is playing as the most loving Mother, as well as an eternal CHILD, doing Her eternal LILA in the eternal GARDEN.

Ma says, "Nothing happens that is not an expression of God's grace—Verily, all is His Grace." I also experienced the living manifestation of Ma's following *VANI* in the company of Marol, the painter-devotee :—"Anchored in patience, bearing everything, abide by His 'NAME' & live joyously".

Another devotee of our beloved Ma Anandamayi in Paris was Claude Portal, who most enthusiastically cheered us on the platform of South Paris by uttering—"JAI MA", It was a joy of very rare nature to hear this *mantramayi* utterance 'JAI MA' in an alien land by a foreigner, but very much for Ma & Her devotees.

Claude Partal took us to Effeil Tower on the 28th May, 1993 and made us comfortable with Marol at mid-night, where one Lebanese friend, Mona Nasif was also present to hear about my experiences with Ma.

Arnaud disclosed to us his deep affinity with Ma and his divine experiences which he had shared as Ma's Grace and Grace alone. On looking to Arnaud's generosity shown to me, Nilima and her son, Chinmaya, Ma's darling child who calls Ma, 'Gori Ma', I suddenly remarked "Mr. Arnaud, you are doing so much for us". On this, he politely mentioned, "No-No. I can't repay what India has done for me, specially Ma Anandamayi, who revealed to me the nature of Guru and His Grace and graciously sent me to Swami Pragyanpad, where I had stayed for three months and got the privilege of *sahaja samadhi* by the Guru's grace".

GRACE, GRACE, GRACE, NOTHING BUT GRACE

Arnaud also showed us a beautiful cassette (video) containing three ashrams of India & their saints taken in 1962—(1) Swami Shivananda, (2) Papa Ramdas and (3) Mata Anandamayi

Under Ma's wonderful Grace and Grace alone this visit of mine has been a perfect plan to awaken or to refreshen the minds of these foreign friends about their association with Ma. I was highly elated to know that they all were for Ma and very much wanted to render their service for Ma's Centenary to be celebrated from May 1995 to May 1996.

As we know, Arnaud is a very renowned photographer of France, of international fame, who has displayed a few video cassettes of Ma on Paris Television and would love to repeat them during the centenary year. He also promised to send one video Eassette to Swarupanandaji, our General Secretary.

One thing highly remarkable about Arnaud was that he has beautifully collected all the gifts offered to him by Ma and specially indicated towards a small carpet on his bed which was lovingly given to him by Ma in Her state of the highest eestasy.

In fine, I express my hearty and sincere thanks to Marol who exposed his soulful sentiments and love intoxicated heart for Ma and Her Grace, which he has been enjoying to this day.

Marol frankly acknowledged the fact that our meeting of 12 hrs. at his residence proved to be highly fruitful as far as the revival of his love for Ma and his memories go.

Thanks to Ma's causeless Grace and Grace alone that oppertuned us to drink the nectar of Ma's wonderful words and some chantings of Ma mutually. It is worthy to note that my visit to France has been a part of Ma' LILA. Claude Portal was initiated in Dehradun Kalyanvan Ashram in 1982 in the holy presence of Ma. This meting of mine with Portal has been highly fruitful, as he came to attend the Samyam Saptaha in Nov. 1993 at Kankhal and remained a A-Class participant. His visit to Ma Anandamayi Ashram, Vrindaban, has also been very fruitful to him on the spiritual plane.

Ma's devotees in France are also interested in celebrating a Samyam Saptaha in Paris during Ma's centenary celebrations and thanks to Ma's Grace and Grace alone devotees like Claude Portal and Marol have come forward to form an association entitled SAM—a short form of Sri Anandamayi Ma. Our French friends are inspired to awaken the Westerners about Ma's teachings and Her total Personality. I am sure Ma will bless these genuine souls !



A Total Being

SRI ANANDAMAYI MA

—JEAN-CLAUDE MAROL

We have come at the present moment, to a critical meeting point for our civilisations. This is a time when our perceptions of life have become incredibly refined and when our communication means have reached an extreme level of sophistication, though we, human beings, are at the same time probably more isolated, without landmarks, and often without resources than ever, and overtaken by unimaginable violences.

When stakes are extreme, extreme "beings" come to life. The reputation of the woman saint, Sri Anandamayi Ma, who attracted millions of people, has grown over the limits of the Indian sub-continent. The countless spiritual families that are a part of Hinduism, Muslims, Buddhists, Westerners from all countries, from all creeds (...and without creed....) have been vivified by her presence.

There is not ONE teaching that would be Ma Anandamayi's. She is where each one is. She does not give Her answer, but OUR answer.

"The answer is YOURS, as your questions are YOURS."

"This body" (this is the way she used to refer to herself when she was alive) passed away in August 1982. Westerners who have met her have kept with discretion up to now the treasure of their meeting. Since she left, Anandamayi Ma is coming alive within many beings who have met her ; but also, and this is not the least extraordinary, in many beings who have never come close to her when she was "alive".

In case of a flood, to be near the source, in the mountains, half way down the hills or further down in the plains does not change anything. This "Great Lady's" centenary birthday that will be celebrated very officially in India from May 95 to May 96 (She was born on April 30th, 1896) seems to be such a flood. In Europe also we are participating in this commemoration.

SRI ANANDAMAYI MA

Many precious documents are already at our disposal: books, pictures, audio recording as well as videos and among them the famous film "Ashrams" realized by Arnaud Desjardins for the ORTF (French TV) in 1961. But several new publications are planned in France at that time:

- A book at ed Originel, will gather some of her words that have not yet been published in France (now in translation).
- A book of pictures (there is one available in Germany) will show photographs of Sri Ma out of which many have not been printed as yet (ed. Terre du ciel).
- A C.D. will tell her songs and laughs.

We believe that institutions such as the UNESCO, Arte France Culture and others will accept to report about her presence which, as we have said, has overflown a cultural continent, at a time when fundamentalisms are exacerbated, when conflicts are so virulent, her words so astonishingly open might help us to come together....to love one another ? (this challenge was already offered....)

Testimonials coming from all sides could easily come together for this event.



WHERE LIFE IS A SONG

—SRI SHIVANANDA

To some life is bitter,
But I find it sweet.
Many accuse it as a struggle,
For me calm and peace.

For my life enters into Ma's being
Holding the burning candle's flame
Enlightening the cave of my heart
Where Ma is gracefully smiling within.



SAM ASSOCIATION SRI ANANDAMAYI MA

Some beings are close, so close, so close that it sometimes takes dozens of years to understand it. Sometimes one even has to wait until one can't tangibly meet them anymore to realize this closeness. The centenary of Sri Ma Anandamayi's birth is an opportunity for Easterners as well as Westerners whose lives have been crossed by this Lady, to share as openly and simply as possible, this "presence".

In India, a wide movement involving all of that country's cultural and spiritual trends is enhanced. During a whole year, many meetings and celebrations will take place. The Government of India will also take part in these events. The presence of Ma Anandamayi is open to a good many interpretations. We would very much like to decipher, with your help and for the good of all of us, some of its aspects.

Thank you for your attention. For this particular attention is a highly valuable one.

Thank you.

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Jean-Claude Marol

Laurence Bolsigner

Claude Portal

PROPOSAL FOR A SET OF BROADCASTINGS

Radio/Television

- Ma Anandamayi's life in the Indian historical, cultural and religious environment.
- Her link with all wisdom teachings. Her universalness.
- Testimonies from beings of all horizons and all confessions whose lives were changed by Ma.
- Devotional songs in the ashrams. Many recordings were done.
- Many videos from private persons as well as professionals are available.
- Christians and Ma Anandamayi. Testimonies of a deep connivance when meeting.
- Presentation of newly published books.
- Presentation of an exhibition of pictures.
- Living great spiritual personalities, both universal and careful attendants of their specific culture, who know in depth the Nature of Ma Anandamayi and might give evidence:

SRI SRI MA'S BIRTH CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The birth centenary celebration of our Divine Mother, which is going to commence from 3rd May, 1995 is indeed a very momentous occasion for all who had the greatest privilege to come in contact with Her.

Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha has taken a number of important steps in order to celebrate Ma's birth centenary in the most befitting manner.

The year-long programme is proposed to be held in different States of India, in Bangladesh and also in various countries of the world.

A detailed programme has been thoughtfully planned, the principal items of which are as follows :

1. **Spiritual :**

1008 Durga Saptasati *Path*, 1008 Bhagavad Gita *Path*, 108 Bhagawat Parayanas, Parayanas of all the four Vedas and of the eighteen Maha Puranas, 108 recitations of the Ramayana, 108 times Rudrabhisheka, Akhand Nama Yagnas, and a number of various other items of great religious significance.

2. **Cultural :**

- i) Special Radio talks and discussions on Ma.
- ii) Panel discussions on Ma on T.V. by eminent scholars and philosophers.
- iii) Seminars/Symposia on Ma in different universities and various other places.
- iv) Spiritual conferences on "Ma's Divine Life & Message to the World" to be attended by leaders of different faiths.
- v) Special *Rama Katha* programme in Varanasi by Sant Morari Bapu.
- vi) Preparation of a full-length Tele-film on Ma.
- vii) Exhibition of Ma's photos and books etc. in principal places.
- viii) Setting up of a Central Archive where all articles personally used by Ma and articles offered to Her by devotees would be preserved and put on display.

3. **Literary :**

- i) Publication of a special "Souvenir" mainly containing :
 - (a) Reminiscences of renowned *Mahatmas* and other distinguished persons.
 - (b) Principal events of Ma's life
 - (c) Selected pictures of Ma.
 - (d) Pictures with brief details of various Ashrams & Institutions in Ma's name.
- ii) Publication of a dignified "Centenary Volume" containing the following :
 - (a) Details of Ma's close association with all principal *Mahatmas* of Her time.
 - (b) Record of Ma's meetings with renowned national and international leaders, topmost philosophers and educationists.

- (c) Brief life-sketches of those who had become integral part of Ma's lila.
- (d) Articles from the pens of distinguished saints & scholars and principal devotees on Ma's unique personality and message to the world.
- iii) Publication of comprehensive biographies of Ma in English and other languages.
- iv) Publication of an Album containing specially selected 100 pictures of Ma with short descriptions.
- v) Publication of handy volumes containing short life-sketches of Ma with 100 selected *vanis* in different languages.

4. Social-Service Activities :

- i) Setting up of regular Anna-kshetras in various Ashrams and development of *Shishu Kalyan* (child welfare) activities through the "Ma Anandamayee Karuna" at Varanasi.
- ii) Free distribution of pure milk and fruits to hospital patients in various places.
- iii) Free eye operation camps in principal places.
- iv) Running of charitable dispensaries in all principal Ashrams.

With the object of implementing the above-mentioned programme in a proper & regularised manner a representative Centenary Celebration Committee has been constituted and steps have also been taken to form Zonal Celebration Committees comprising different States of India.

It is needless to say that full co-operation and active support of all the devotees and admirers of our Divine Mother are deemed absolutely necessary for fulfilment of this gigantic task.

Devotees are particularly requested to send their donations either by Money Orders or through A/c Payee Cheques/Drafts drawn in favour of "*Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha—Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Centenary Celebration A/c.*" at the following address :

Secretary, Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Centenary Celebration Committee,
Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha,
Kalkaji, New Delhi - 110 019.

It may be added in this connection that all donations paid for this noble cause will be exempt from Income-Tax under Section 80-G of the I.T. Act.

Devotees may as per their personal convenience pay their donations for this cause to the Zonal Conveners as well and obtain printed official receipts issued on behalf of the Centenary Celebration Committee.

JAI MA.



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14. NAIMISHARANYA : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Puran Mandir,
P.O. Naimisharanya, Sitapur-261 402 (U.P.)
15. NEW DELHI : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Kalkaji, New Delhi-110 019 (Tel : 6840365)
16. PUNE : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Ganesh Khind Road, Pune-411 007 (Maharashtra).
17. PURI : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Swargadwar, Puri-752 001 (Orissa)
18. RAJGIR : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Rajgir, Nalanda-803 116 (Bihar)
19. RANCHI : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Main Road, P.O. Ranchi-834 001 (Bihar)
20. TARAPEETH : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Chandipur-Tarapeeth,
Birbhum-731 233 (W.B.)
21. UTTARKASHI : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Kali Mandir, P.O. Uttarkashi-249 193 (U.P.)
22. VARANASI : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Bhadaini, Varanasi-221 001 (U.P.)
(Tel : 310 054+311794)
23. VINDHYACHAL : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Ashtabhuja Hill,
P.O. Vindhyachal, Mirzapur-231 307 (U.P.)
24. VRINDAVAN : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Vrindavan, Mathura-281 121 (U.P.) Tel : 442024

IN BANGLADESH:

1. DHAKA : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
14, Siddheshwari Lane, Dhaka-17 (Tel : 403766)
2. KHEORA : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Kheora, Via-Kasba, Brahmanbaria.





मुद्रक- रत्ना प्रिंटिंग वर्क्स, कमच्छा, वाराणसी